

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A method of detecting stopwords in a query comprising:  
  
identifying a potential stopword in the query based on a comparison to a list of stopwords;  
  
generating a plurality of sets of context data based on the query and the potential stopword;  
  
comparing the sets of context data; and  
  
classifying the potential stopword either as an actual stopword or ~~as being material to the query~~ a non-stopword based on the comparing.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
  
rewriting the query to remove the actual stopword from the query.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the potential stopword includes a plurality of stopwords and each of the plurality of sets of context data corresponds to a combination of the potential stopwords.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein comparing the sets of context data includes comparing the sets of context data to one another to determine whether various ones of the plurality of sets of context data are substantially similar.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating the plurality of sets of context data includes:
  - generating a first set of context data from the query; and
  - generating a second set of context data from a version of the query in which the potential stopword is removed.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating the plurality of sets of context data includes:
  - deriving a plurality of second queries from the query and the potential stopword;
  - and
  - querying a database using the plurality of second queries.
7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein querying the database includes issuing the plurality of second queries to a search engine, and wherein the potential stopword includes a plurality of potential stopwords and the plurality of second queries are derived from combinations of the potential stopwords plus terms in the query that are not potential stopwords.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating the plurality of sets of context data includes:

deriving a plurality of second queries from the query and the potential stopword;  
and

locating categories relevant to the second queries using a category generator.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the potential stopword includes a plurality of potential stopwords and plurality of second queries are derived from combinations of the potential stopwords plus terms in the query that are not potential stopwords.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the potential stopword includes a stop-phrase.

11. (Currently amended) A method comprising:

identifying potential stopwords in a query;

generating context data based on the query and the potential stopwords;

performing a comparison of the context data;

designating at least one of the potential stopwords as a non-stopword based on the comparison;

designating, as actual stopwords, ~~those of~~ from among the potential stopwords  
~~that do not meaningfully contribute to~~ based on the ~~generation of the context data~~  
comparison; and

rewriting the query to remove one or more of the actual stopwords from the  
query.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein generating the context data includes:  
retrieving a plurality of sets of context data in which each said set corresponds to  
a different combination of the potential stopwords.

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the designating the actual  
stopwords includes:  
comparing the plurality of sets of context data to one another to determine  
whether various ones of the plurality of sets of context data ~~are substantially similar~~  
differ,

wherein rewriting the query to remove the one or more actual stopwords is based  
on the comparison of the plurality of sets of context data.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein generating the context data includes:  
generating a first set of context data as context data derived from the query; and  
generating a second set of context data as context data derived from a version of  
the query in which one or more potential stopwords are removed.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein generating the context data includes:  
deriving a plurality of second queries from the query and the potential stopwords;  
and  
querying a database using the plurality of second queries.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of second queries are  
derived from combinations of the potential stopwords plus terms in the query that are not  
potential stopwords.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein generating the context data includes:  
deriving a plurality of second queries from the query and the potential stopwords;  
and  
issuing the plurality of second queries to a category generator to locate categories  
relevant to the second queries.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the plurality of second queries are  
derived from combinations of the potential stopwords plus terms in the query that are not  
potential stopwords.

19. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein identifying the potential stopwords  
includes:

matching terms in the query to a pre-defined list of stopwords.

20. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the potential stopwords include potential stopwords and stop-phrases.

21. (Currently amended) A system implemented within one or more computer devices, comprising:

a parser component configured to receive a search query and identify potential stopwords in the search query;

a context generation component to generate context data based on the search query and the potential stopwords; and

a comparator component to compare the context data to determine those of the potential stopwords that ~~effected generation of context data that is not substantially similar to context data unassociated with those potential~~ are actual stopwords and those of the potential stopwords that are non-stopwords.

22. (Currently amended) The system of claim 21, wherein, when the comparator determines that one or more of the potential stopwords ~~do not effect generation of context data that is not substantially similar to context data unassociated with the one or more potential~~ are actual stopwords, the search query is rewritten to a form that does not include the one or more ~~potential~~ actual stopwords.

23. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the context generation component includes a search engine.

24. (Currently amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the comparator component compares sets of documents returned from the search engine to determine those of the potential stopwords that effect generation of context data that ~~is not substantially similar to~~ differs from context data unassociated with those potential stopwords.

25. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the context generation component includes a category generator configured to locate category lists relevant to a search query.

26. (Currently amended) The system of claim 25, wherein the comparator component compares category lists to one another to determine those of the potential stopwords that effect generation of context data that ~~is not substantially similar to~~ differs from context data unassociated with those potential stopwords.

27. (Currently amended) A ~~device~~ system implemented within one or more computer devices, comprising:

means for identifying potential stopwords in a query, wherein the potential stopwords include at least one actual stopword;

means for generating context data based on the query and the potential stopwords;

means for performing a comparison of the context data;  
means for detecting the at least one actual stopword based on ~~whether the one or~~  
~~more of the potential stopwords meaningfully contributes to the generation the~~  
comparison of the context data; and  
means for rewriting the query to remove the at least one actual stopword.

28. (Currently amended) The ~~device~~ system of claim 27, further comprising:  
means for searching a document index to locate a set of documents and return the  
set of documents to the means for generating context data.

29. (Currently amended) The ~~device~~ system of claim 27, further comprising:  
means for locating a list of categories relevant to an input category query and  
returning the list of categories to the means for generating context data.

30. (Currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium containing  
instructions for causing a processor to perform a method, the computer-readable storage  
medium comprising:

instructions for identifying potential stopwords in a query;  
instructions for retrieving context data based on the query and the potential  
stopwords;  
instructions for performing a comparison of the context data;



instructions for classifying ~~those~~ of the potential stopwords, ~~that do not~~  
~~meaningfully contribute to the retrieving of the context data~~ as actual stopwords and  
~~others of the potential stopwords that meaningfully contribute to the retrieving of the~~  
~~context data as being material to the query~~ or non-stopwords based on the comparison;  
and

instructions for rewriting the query to remove the actual stopwords.

31. (Currently amended) A document retrieval system comprising:

a search engine configured to:

receive a user search query,

receive rewritten versions of the search query that exclude stopwords ~~not~~  
~~material to an intended result of~~ from the user search query, and

perform a search of a document index based on the rewritten versions of  
the search query; and

a stopword detection component to rewrite the search query, the stopword  
detection component including:

a parser component configured to receive the user search query and  
identify potential stopwords in the search query;

a context generation component to generate context data based on the  
search query and the potential stopwords; and

a comparator component to compare the context data to determine ~~those~~  
which of the potential stopwords ~~that meaningfully contribute to the context data and~~

~~classify these potential~~ are actual stopwords and which of the potential stopwords are as  
non-stopwords to be included in at least one of the rewritten versions of the search query.